



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Fort McHenry National
Monument & Historic Shrine

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Fort McHenry News Release

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Bicycle Restrictions at Fort McHenry NM&HS

The temporary prohibition on bicycle use at Fort McHenry National Monument and Historic Shrine will remain in effect until the new visitor center construction is completed this fall. Visitor safety is the primary reason for enforcing the temporary prohibition on bicycles within the park.

- The pace of construction is picking up. As the building takes shape, there are more heavy vehicles such as cement mixers, tractor-trailer trucks, and flatbeds with bricks using the main road. Having bicyclists riding alongside such traffic is a hazardous situation.
- This construction is taking place during a time of heavy school visits. The park receives, on average, 25 busloads of students per day. With construction on the main road **all busses** must discharge their passengers at the main gate. This means that these students will be using the sidewalk and trails to get to the current visitor center and star fort.
- The water taxi is making more runs at this time of year, increasing visitor traffic on the seawall trail.
- Major portions of the former biking trail are closed due to construction. The portions from the parking lot to the boat pier, a quarter-mile section from the main road, and the section where the new visitor center is being built, are already closed.
- Because of construction, the bike loop is not complete and there are no safe turnarounds on the loop trail to accommodate safe, two-way traffic on the portions that remain open to pedestrians.

- Park visitation, particularly on weekends, remains strong, however the usable portion of the trail is smaller, meaning there is a greater concentration of visitors on the trail, leaving little to no room for bicycles.
- From August to January 2009 the park allowed bicycles into the park along the main road, however many users did not stay on the paved surfaces and there was significant damage caused to the grounds.
- The mulch paths are fine for walkers but are not built to accommodate bicycles safely. Bicycles exert more pressure than pedestrians and would quickly churn the mulch paths into mud.
- Authority to close all or a portion of the park is covered in 36 Code of Federal Regulations (1.5F)

This decision to temporarily prohibit bike usage within the park was not arbitrary or taken lightly. The park decided to temporarily prohibit the use of bicycles within the park to insure visitor safety while minimizing damage to the resource. The park is taking proactive steps towards installing a new seawall trail that is wider and includes a bike lane. Construction on this portion of the trail will begin this summer.

- Bike racks are located at the main gate, adjacent to the temporary parking lot for those who arrive by bike and want to see the park.
- Cars are also being closely managed during construction.

The National Park Service appreciates your patience with the construction and looks forward to welcoming all to the improved trails and facilities at the earliest date possible.

For questions/comments, please contact Chief Ranger Glen Clark at 410-962-4290 Ext. 501.